

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

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O 281625Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4598

S E C R E T KINGSTON 1497

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, EMIN, JM, US

SUBJ: BAUXITE SITREP 35

PASS OPIC

1. PARTIES RETURNED TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE YESTERDAY AFTER A TWO DAY BREAK THAT BOTH SIDES REGARDED AT TIMES AS POSSIBLY FATAL. INITIATIVE CAME FROM COMPANIES, BUT GOVT OBVIOUSLY WILLING TO BE SEDUCED. YESTERDAY'S MEETING BEGAN WITH A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF BARRACKING AND "WHO SHOT JOHN" OVER THE TWO DAY BREAK, BUT WAS PRIMARILY DEVOTED TO SCENARIO FOR THE COMING WEEK. INDUSTRY REPS INFORMED GOVT NEGOTIATORS THAT THEY HAD USED UP THEIR AUTHORITY WITH LAST THURSDAY'S OFFER, BUT THAT A MEETING WAS SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY IN WASHINGTON AMONG THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF THE COMPANIES TO CONSIDER THE POSITION. INDUSTRY REPS MADE CLEAR THAT THEY WERE NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT BEING ABLE TO MAKE A MORE SUBSTANTIAL OFFER AFTER THE TUESDAY MEETING, BUT THAT THAT POSSIBILITY COULD NOT BE EXCLUDED. ACCORDINGLY GOVT AGREED TO EXTEND ITS DEADLINE FOR A SOLUTION TO REVENUE ISSUES FROM APR 29 TO MAY 2, ON CONDITION THAT INDUSTRY REPS RETURNED WITH FULL AUTHORITY TO MAKE A DEAL WITHOUT FURTHER REFERENCE TO THEIR PRINCIPLES EXCEPT BY TELEPHONE OR CABLE. INDUSTRY AGREED. AT THE TIME OF THIS MEETING INDUSTRY NOT AWARE THAT GOVT HAD ASKED FOR APPOINTMENT WITH EAGLEBURGER ON MONDAY.

2. WHILE YESTERDAY'S DISCUSSIONS MAINLY DEVOTED TO SCENARIO FOR COMING WEEK, INDUSTRY TOOK ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITY TO PROBE GOVT

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POSITION IN AN EFFORT TO GET A HINT ON WHAT FIGURE SHORT OF GOVT'S

ORIGINAL DEMAND IT MIGHT BE WILLING TO SETTLE FOR. THIS EFFORT WAS UNSUCCESSFUL, BUT IN THE PROCESS INDUSTRY LEARNED MORE ABOUT GOVTS ORIGINAL DEMANDS THAN IT HAD PREVIOUSLY UNDERSTOOD. AMONG OTHER THINGS, IT IS EVIDENT THAT GOVT HAS MADE A NUMBER OF SUBTLE CHANGES IN ITS POSITION AS NEGOTIATIONS EVOLVED, WHICH TAKEN TOGETHER, LOWERS ITS REVENUE TARGET SLIGHTLY. NEVERTHELESS PARTIES ARE STILL FAR APART AND, EVEN IF INDUSTRY FINDS IT IS ABLE TO BETTER ITS APRIL 25 OFFER, FINAL AGREEMENT WILL DEPEND ON WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF THE GOVT TO MAKE A SUBSTANTIAL CONCESSION.

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